



Potential Directed Research Project

Fall 2026

Background on the Centre for the Study of Living Standards

Founded in 1995, the Centre for the Study of Living Standards (CSLS) is Canada's leading non-profit research organization focused on living standards, economic well-being and productivity.

We contribute to a better understanding of living standards by providing rigorous, evidence-based research, data and insights to inform public policy and support a more prosperous and equitable society.

Directed Research Project Description

Over the years CSLS has hosted dozens of successful directed research projects. For Winter 2026 session, we propose the following as a new potential project:

Diversifying Canadian Trade While Increasing Economic Complexity

Project Description and Policy Relevance

Canada's exports remain concentrated in a relatively small number of products and markets, particularly the United States. Recent trade disruptions have increased the importance of expanding Canada's export markets and developing new export capabilities.

This project will evaluate Canada's trade diversification opportunities using economic complexity — an approach that examines the productive knowledge and capabilities embodied in a country's exports. It will consider:

- Canada's export concentration by product and destination;
- Changes in Canada's economic complexity over time;
- Canada's performance relative to peer economies;
- Products in which Canada has a comparative advantage; and
- Promising new products and export markets related to Canada's existing capabilities.

The project will distinguish between selling existing products in new markets and developing more sophisticated, higher-value exports. Where possible, it may examine differences across provinces.



Student Benefits

The successful student will gain practical experience conducting original, policy-relevant research on international trade. They will develop research, analytical and policy-writing skills relevant to careers in government, consulting and economic research.

Tasks and Deliverables

The student will:

1. Review the literature on trade diversification and economic complexity.
2. Examine Canada's trade patterns and compare them with peer economies.
3. Assess Canada's comparative advantages and economic complexity.
4. Identify promising products, sectors and non-U.S. export markets.
5. Produce a research report.
6. Present the findings to CSLS staff.

Required Qualifications

The preferred candidate will have a background in economics, public policy or a related field; strong research and writing skills; and an interest in Canadian trade and economic policy.

Supervision and Mentorship

The student will receive regular guidance from CSLS economists on the research design, analysis and final report. They are welcome to work on this project in the CSLS office in a productive and collaborative research environment.

We welcome the opportunity to collaborate with University of Ottawa students on these important projects. CSLS has a strong record of mentoring students through directed research placements, and we are committed to ensuring participants gain valuable applied experience.

Sincerely,

Dr. Stephen Tapp
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